

**Job Description**  
**UNITY of Greater New Orleans**  
Family Assessment and Problem Solving Specialist

**TITLE:** Family Assessment and Problem Solving Specialist

**TYPE OF POSITION:** Full Time Employee

**DIRECT SUPERVISOR:** Director of Family Coordinated Entry System and Deputy Director

**POSITION OVERVIEW**

The Family Assessment and Problem Solving has a primary function to engage constructively with families who are seeking emergency shelter by conducting “Housing Problem Solving” conversations to help families identify strengths and community resources to stabilize housing outside of the homeless response system as much as possible. The position has a key role to help the CoC achieve our goal to make the homeless experience brief, rare, and non-recurring for families. The specialist assists the work of the Director of Family Coordinated Entry as part of the UNITY Coordinated Entry System team supervised by the UNITY Deputy Director.

**DUTIES OF THE FAMILY TRIAGE AND DIVERISON SPECIALIST:**

FAMILY CRISIS LINE

- Answer the CoC Family Housing Crisis Line promptly and respond to messages within 24 hours.
- Engage directly with families who are in a housing crisis to utilize a strengths-based and client centered approach to help families identify strengths, successes, and resources that they can use to develop plans to move towards a self-sufficiency and to retain/security permanent housing and avoid having to enter emergency shelter.
- Utilize community resources to link clients to self-sustaining sources of income, benefits, and other economic supports as well as professional resources to assist clients in achieving their goals.
- Coordinate appropriate linkages to available mainstream services for behavioral and medical health needs that will aid housing stability.
- Provide consistent access and assessment services for families who call the family crisis line.
- Build rapport and trust with families to encourage them to consider housing options.
- Provide landlord and/or family mediation interventions as diversion techniques as appropriate.
- Continually promote self-determination and self-sufficiency in interactions with clients.
- Assess personal safety and undertakes due diligence in maintaining personal safety with families that may be experiencing adverse life circumstance, trauma, and/or exceptional emotional response to homelessness or risk of homelessness.
- Meet with families at the office to conduct one-on-one housing problem solving conversations or assessments.

- Conduct follow-up calls 30 days after diversion to provide light-touch case management and referrals.
- Maintain paperwork and records of transactions of assessments and diversions in real time or as close as possible to assist timeliness of system response and provide the data needed to identify and address risk factors for homelessness as well as identify and address racial disparities.
- Complete all documentation in a timely and accurate manner, including phone logs, HMIS data entry, and weekly reports.
- Provide information to CoC regarding system gaps and resource needs that would more effectively assist families who are in a housing crisis.

#### COLLABORATION WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Establish and maintain positive, productive working relationships with shelters, housing programs, and community members.
- Respond to referrals from partner agencies and community members.
- Assist Family Coordinated Entry Manager to maintain updated information regarding emergency and permanent housing resources availability.
- Follow established protocols for the assessment and referral for families for emergency shelter or other housing resources.
- Able to conduct family navigation meetings with partner agencies to prioritize assistance to families with the greatest needs and provide case conferencing guidance with challenging cases.
- Attend collaborative meetings with partner agencies that will assist in preventing and ending homelessness for families.
- Serve as a local expert in diversion and problem solving to promote effectiveness throughout the homeless system.

#### HOMELESS SYSTEM COLLABORATION

- Assist Family Coordinated Entry Manager in efforts and initiatives intended to meet community goals and benchmarks related to ending family homelessness.
- Provide information to assist with CoC planning efforts to improve system response for families.
- Identify families for participation in the Council of Lived Experience, CoC organized focus groups, or other activities to raise their voices.
- Assist with coordinated entry activities for youth and young adults, point-in-time, or other activities as needed.
- Participate in CoC trainings.
- Assist the planning and conduct of trainings for partner agencies about coordinated entry.

#### **SKILLS**

- Must be solution focused and creative.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the work environment.
- Compassionate team player who is detail-oriented and comfortable working on multiple tasks in a deadline-oriented environment.
- Conviction about the capacity of people to grow and change.

- Ability to establish and set appropriate limits with persons served to help them gain skills and confidence.
- Capacity to maintain a role to empower clients and to intervene appropriately to meet service goals.
- Self-motivated and dependable.
- Must be empathetic and caring.
- Ability to adapt to the needs of the organization and program requirements.
- Must be able to work effectively with people who have experienced vulnerability, trauma, incarceration, substance use, compromised mental wellness or other conditions that have impacted housing stability.
- Self-starter who is interested in learning more about successful diversion methods and other interventions and innovations to end homelessness.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Experience in housing, working with families
- Familiar with community resources available for families with children, including access to mainstream resources like child care assistance, LACHIP, TANF.
- Excellent communication skills in-person, on the phone, and through email.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Basic computer knowledge of MS Office, Google Docs/sheets, and ability to work with HMIS database.
- Ability to speak Spanish is helpful.
- Experience with community mediation is helpful.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Must be willing to pass a background check to verify no restrictions regarding working with families with children.